

Treatment for lymphoma

Different lymphomas may need different treatment. Your general health and the stage of your lymphoma are also important in deciding what treatment is best for you. This page gives you a brief overview of treatment for lymphoma and tells you where to find more information.

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How do my medical team decide what treatment I need?

Your treatment is planned individually. It is planned and managed by a team of health professionals who are specialists in different areas. Together, they are known as a **multidisciplinary team**. One specialist is responsible for your overall care.

Your medical team aim to offer you treatment that has the best chance of successfully treating your lymphoma with the least damage to your long-term health.

There are guidelines for the treatment of many types of lymphoma. For example, the **British Society for Haematology** produces guidelines for haematologists. However, your medical team considers several factors when deciding on the best treatment for you.

Lymphoma-specific factors, like:

- the **type of lymphoma** you have
- the **stage of your disease**
- the size of any lumps of lymphoma
- what parts of your body are affected by lymphoma
- your **symptoms**
- results of genetic tests on your lymphoma, which can tell the doctor if you are likely to respond to certain treatments.

Individual factors, like:

- your age and future plans, eg if you are of childbearing age your doctor might suggest treatment that is less likely to **reduce your fertility**
- your general health
- any other medical conditions you have
- any other medication you need.

Children and young people under 18 are often given different treatment to adults. If you are under 18 or are the parent or carer of a child with lymphoma, you might want to read our section dedicated to **children and young people**.

What do I need to know about my treatment?

Your medical team should talk to you about your treatment before it starts. They should explain:

- the **aim of your treatment** – whether it aims to cure or control your lymphoma
- the exact drugs they want to use
- how often you are to be given treatment and how long it normally takes
- how your treatment is given

- how often you need to attend the hospital and whether you need to stay overnight
- any **side effects** you might develop, including late effects (side effects that develop months or years after treatment)
- what to look out for and where to get help if you have any problems during your treatment.

It can be difficult to understand everything you are told. You might forget what your medical team have said. Ask questions and request written information; some NHS trusts produce their own information, others offer information produced by charities.

You can take notes during the consultation if it helps you remember and understand what's being discussed. You could record the consultation to listen to it again later. It may be helpful to bring a relative or a friend to the consultation, and they can take notes for you.

We have compiled a list of **questions to ask about lymphoma**, including questions about treatment, that you might find useful.

If you have any questions after your consultation, get in touch with your medical team. You can leave a message and they will call you back if they are not available to speak to you straightaway. If you haven't been given a contact number for your specialist nurse or another member of your medical team, ask for it. You can contact your hospital switchboard if you don't have a contact number.

Where can I find more information about treatment for lymphoma?

Our information on **types of lymphoma** outlines the treatment most commonly used for each type of lymphoma. Your specialist might recommend a different treatment to those most commonly used depending on your individual circumstances.

You can find out more about how your type of treatment is given on our dedicated pages, including:

- **chemotherapy**
- **radiotherapy**
- **antibody therapy**, including **rituximab**
- **steroids**
- **stem cell transplants**
- **targeted drugs.**

Macmillan also produces **useful information about treatment for cancer**, including information on different chemotherapy drugs and regimens (combinations of drugs).

Your specialist might ask you to consider being treated as part of a **clinical trial** (a scientific study that tests medical treatments).

Treatment is only part of your care when you have lymphoma. You might also find our information on **living with lymphoma** useful. It includes ways to support your body through your treatment and recovery, information on your emotional wellbeing and advice on dealing with the day-to-day practicalities of life with lymphoma.

Further reading

- **Antibody therapy**
- **Chemotherapy**
- **Complementary therapy**
- **Maintenance therapy**
- **Radiotherapy**

- Side effects of treatment
- Stem cell transplants
- Steroids
- Targeted drugs
- Treatment during pregnancy
- Watch and wait

Acknowledgements

- We would like to thank the Expert Reviewers and members of our Reader Panel who gave their time to review this information.
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Content last reviewed: May 2016

Updated: April 2018

Next planned review: May 2019



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